



DRAFT TRANSITION PLAN For the Proposed Consolidation of Rosario Castellanos Elementary School into Lazaro Cardenas Elementary School

I. Introduction

Chicago Public Schools (CPS) is committed to providing every child from every community with a high quality education that prepares them for success in college and in life. CPS students continue to make record-breaking academic progress in every part of the city. Our vision is that all CPS schools can build on this progress by offering high quality, rigorous instruction from talented educators that help put Chicago students on a path to lasting success.

Before the start of the 2017-18 school year, the Local School Council at Rosario Castellanos Elementary School (Castellanos) voted to request that the principal at Lazaro Cardenas Elementary School (Cardenas) serve as principal of Castellanos, in addition to his leadership as principal of Cardenas. On August 22, 2017, the principal of Cardenas begin serving as the principal of both Cardenas and Castellanos. On November 2, 2017, the Local School Councils at both Castellanos and Cardenas requested that a full consolidation of the two schools be considered by Chicago Public Schools (CPS).

Pursuant to the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School Actions (Guidelines), Castellanos' and Cardenas' Local School Councils have requested that a consolidation of Castellanos and Cardenas be considered.

In line with this community-driven request, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of CPS is proposing to consolidate Castellanos into Cardenas.

The proposal to consolidate Castellanos into Cardenas involves the following changes:

- Cardenas will operate from three different facilities: the current Cardenas facilities at 2345 S. Millard Avenue and 2406 S. Central Park Avenue (Kindergarten to 3rd grade) and the Castellanos facility, 2524 S. Central Park Avenue (4th to 8th grade).

The transition plan outlined below summarizes supports that will be provided by Castellanos, Cardenas and CPS to ensure a smooth transformation from two schools into one.

II. Summary of Proposed Action

CPS is proposing to consolidate Castellanos into Cardenas. Castellanos is an attendance area school located at 2524 S. Central Park Avenue that serves 4th through 8th grade. Cardenas is an attendance area school located at 2345 S. Millard Avenue and 2406 S. Central Park Avenue that serves Kindergarten through 3rd grade. Castellanos currently serves 601 students and Cardenas currently serves 555 students. If this proposal is approved, Castellanos' and Cardenas' attendance areas will be unaffected, since both schools already have the same a designated attendance area.

This proposal is consistent with the Chief Executive Officer's Guidelines for School Actions (Guidelines) because it is a proposal requested by parents or community members via the process to request proposals outlined in the Guidelines. Specifically, the Local School Councils for both Cardenas and Castellanos submitted a letter on Nov. 2, 2017 requesting the consolidation of these two schools. The resulting space utilization after the consolidation will not exceed the facility's enrollment efficiency range, as defined by the CPS' Space Utilization Standards. Additionally, the students impacted by this proposed consolidation are being provided the option to enroll at Cardenas, a higher performing school, as defined by the Guidelines.

The combined enrollment of Castellanos and Cardenas pre-kindergarten through 8th grades total 1,156 students. Thus, the resulting space utilization after the consolidation will not exceed the facilities' enrollment efficiency range.

III. Safety and Security

At the present time, there are no recognized CPS safety concerns at either school. If this proposal is approved, the CPS Office of Safety & Security will work with the administrations of Castellanos and Cardenas to review each school's safety and security plan. A variety of supports for students and the community nearby will be considered with feedback from parents. These supports may include the following:

- First and foremost, CPS will hold safety planning meetings to ensure that all safety efforts are coordinated between CPS, Administration, Parents and the Chicago Police Department;
- Examine current Safe Passage Program and need for additional supports for those students who walk to school;
- Safety plans for parents who drive their children to school will be created;
- A review of safety technology will be conducted to determine whether existing safety technology needs to be enhanced. This review will include cameras installed at Castellanos and screening protocols;
- Review Security Officer Staffing levels based on approved action.

IV. Supports for Students and Schools

CPS is committed to ensuring a successful transition if the Board approves this proposal. To accomplish this, CPS proposes the following supports to meet the academic, social and emotional, and specific learning needs of affected students. These resources may be further customized as feedback is obtained at community meetings and a public hearing regarding this proposal. Additionally, resources may be adjusted to meet the unique needs of affected students if deemed necessary.

Support for Students' Academic Needs

To ensure students receive high-quality academic instruction throughout the transition, the following will occur:

- **Academic Planning Teams:** Castellanos and Cardenas will designate teachers to form joint Academic Planning Teams. Academic Planning Teams consisting of teachers from both schools, grouped by subject and grade level, will meet to plan the curriculum, which will ease the transition.

- **Common Scheduling/Enrichment:** Both Castellanos and Cardenas will outline the programs at each school and discuss how the programs at each school can be preserved, enhanced and incorporated into the schedule for the next academic year.
- **Assess the need for Professional Development:** Since the two school populations are similar, professional development would be focused on integrating the staff to ensure that the academic environment provides for a strong, continuous educational focus and students transition to the new building.

Support for Students' Social and Emotional Needs

CPS understands that when students transition into new situations and environments, additional support is needed to help them adjust. CPS and the Office of Social Emotional Learning (OSEL) will consult with the Castellanos and Cardenas school communities to continue existing SEL supports and determine the need for additional resources for a school-specific plan that may include the following:

- Assess the need to develop a Campus Ambassadors Program that would identify students from Cardenas and Castellanos as liaisons for the two schools. The liaisons will be identified as student leaders next year to support the transition.
- Assess the need for a Climate/culture team that may consist of a group of representative staff (including administrators, teachers, counselors, and security officers) from both schools to develop a combined climate & culture team, which will lead the planning of school-wide policies and practices to promote positive relationships and a welcoming, supportive school environment. This includes cultivating a sense of community between all staff and students.
- Assess the need for a Behavioral Health Team to support both schools in ensuring their existing systems identify when students have higher levels of social and emotional need, connect them to targeted interventions and track their progress to ensure success. Guiding practices will be established through collaboration to prepare for students who may need additional social and emotional support. Training will be supported by CPS and the Office of Social Emotional Learning.
- Assess the need for additional professional development for all teachers to help them develop skills and resources that support all students.

Support for Specific Students' Needs

Support for Diverse Learners

Students with disabilities and their families will be supported in the transition process through clear communication, continual support for academic instruction and ensuring that Cardenas is fully able to implement students' Individual Education Programs (IEPs). Students with disabilities, as with all students impacted by school actions, will receive intensive support to ensure their academic and social-emotional needs are met. Students with disabilities will also receive the following categories of support, adjustable to individual student/family need:

Current students with disabilities will continue to receive the following supports, required by law:

- *A free and appropriate public education (FAPE)*
- *The implementation of the student's IEP in the least restrictive environment (LRE)*
- *A focus on student academic and social emotional progress*

Currently each school has a counselor/case manager. The caseload with the consolidation is anticipated to remain the same as what currently exists at both schools. The school will receive consistent staffing support to ensure the IEP process continues smoothly for the 2018-19 school year.

In addition, a district representative from the Office of Diverse Learner Supports and Services (ODLSS) will be assigned to work with families and students to support them throughout the process of transitioning to their new school for the 2018-19 school year. Specifically, the district representative will:

- Work with teachers on appropriate programming to support the transitioning diverse learners.
- Make sure classrooms are appropriately set up for the newly transitioning students with diverse learning needs.
- Families can reach their District Representative, Ines Castaneda, at icastaneda2@cps.edu.

Support for Students in Temporary Living Situations

- The CPS Office of Students in Temporary Living Situations (OSTLS) will continue the support provided to Students in Temporary Living Situations (STLS) as required by law. These include free school meals, enrollment support, and provision of required school uniforms and school supplies as needed, transportation assistance when eligible and waivers of all school related fees;
- Under the proposed consolidation, returning STLS students may choose to attend Cardenas or meet with OSTLS staff to identify enrollment options, develop academic readiness plans and safety plans to support them throughout the transition period;
- STLS staff is available if the students wish to learn about additional schools to transition to;
- For those students who had been homeless before the 2018-19 school, their school of origin will become the first school where they enroll for the 2018-19 school year;
- For families currently enrolled in the STLS program, younger siblings may attend the same school that their older sibling elects.

Additionally, CPS will provide professional development and support to staff on providing transition services for STLS students.

Support for English Learners

- Current and future English Language Learners (ELs) will receive state mandated bilingual services (Transitional Bilingual Education (TBE) or Transitional Program of Instruction (TPI)), as required. English as a Second Language (ESL) instruction provided by an ESL-endorsed teacher is part of both programs;
- Meaningful access to the core curriculum is provided to TBE students through native language instruction in the core content (language arts, math, science, and social studies);
- For TPI students, meaningful access to core curriculum is delivered through sheltered English content instruction and native language supports, based on the individual student's need, and provided by appropriately endorsed (bilingual- or ESL-endorsed) teacher(s);
- Additionally, CPS would allow for the current positions provided to Castellanos and Cardenas by CPS through OLCE to stay in place for the 2018-19 school year.

Support for Students' Transportation Needs

- Provisions for specific student populations (i.e., student with disabilities, Students in Temporary Living Situations and NCLB qualifying students), as determined by the CPS transportation policy, will continue to apply.

V. Additional Logistical Information

Information Regarding Choice of Schools

If this proposal is approved, students attending Castellanos will be enrolled at Cardenas. CPS is committed to providing educational options that fit each student's unique learning needs. To support families in understanding their enrollment options, information from the Office of Access & Enrollment is available:

- Online (www.cps.edu or www.cpsoae.edu),
- By email (oea@cps.edu),
- By phone (773-553-2060)
- At an information session to be scheduled at a future date if the Board approves the proposal.

Public Comment

Community Meetings and Public Hearings:

CPS will hold two community meetings and one formal public hearing regarding this proposed action. Public comment will be accepted during each meeting or hearing. CPS is committed to considering community feedback and will amend this draft transition plan accordingly.

Community Meeting 1

January 9, 2018
6 to 8 p.m.
Rosario Castellanos
Elementary School
2524 S Central Park Ave

Community Meeting 2

January 16, 2018
6 to 8 p.m.
Rosario Castellanos
Elementary School
2524 S Central Park Ave

Public Hearing

January 25, 2018
7 to 8 p.m.
CPS Central Office
42 West Madison Street

Further Questions and Concerns:

All of this information can be found at CPS.edu/Transitions. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this proposal and the draft transition plan, please call Chicago Public Schools at (773) 553-1500 or email Transitions@cps.edu.